

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6321

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FROM AMBASSADOR TO SECRETARY

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AO, IV

SUB: HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY'S VIEWS ON ANGOLA

REF: A) STATE 299944: B) STATE 299327

SUMMARY: IN 50- MINUTE APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY THIS NOON, I PRESENTED SECRETARY'S MESSAGE ON HOLDING LINE IN ANGOLA. HOUPHOUET RESPONDED VERY POSITIVELY. HE GREATLY FEARS SOVIET INTERVENTION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS NOT ONLY FOR ANGOLA BUT FOR NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AND ALL OF AFRICA. HE BELIEVES OAU WILL HOLD FAST IN JANUARY MEETINGS. HE WILL CONTINUE TO HELP. HE ALSO BELIEVES US SHOULD PROVIDE ARMS AND TECHNICIANS IN ANGOLA, THE SOVIETS MUST BE STOPPED AND US IS ONLY COUNTRY THAT CAN DO IT. BUT HE DESPAIRS OF US PUBLIC OPINION. HE WELCOMES PROSPECTIVE SCHAUFLE VISIT, THE SOONER THE BETTER. HE WILL BE IN TOGO JANUARY 7-9. END SUMMARY.

1. REF (A) RECEIVED THIS MORNING. CALLED CHIEF OF PROTOCOL TO REQUEST APPOINTMENT ON ANGOLA AND GOT IN TO SEE PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY AT 13:30. SPEED WITH WHICH APPOINTMENT ARRANGED IS CLEAR INDICATION OF IMPORTANCE HOUPHOUET GIVES TO ANGOLAN PROBLEMS EVEN ON DAY HIS WARD AND LIBERIAN PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S SON

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ARE BEING MARRIED HERE THIS AFTERNOON.

2. CONVEYED SECRETARY'S MESSAGE IN FULL, STRESSING THAT NOTWITHSTANDING PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL DOUBTS ABOUT WHAT OUR ROLE SHOULD BE, USG IS STILL DETERMINED TO CONTINUE TO RESIST SOVIET ATTEMPT TO DOMINATE ANGOLA. PRAISED HOUPHOUET FOR HIS FORTHRIGHT STAND AND SUCCESS INCONVINCING OTHERS TO HOLD FAST ON OUA'S PRESENT POSITION.

3. HOUPHOUET CONTINUES TO STAND FIRM AND SAID HE HAD RALLIED OTHERS AROUND HIM, INCLUDING KING OF MOROCCO AND OTHER NORTH AFRICAN ARABS EXCEPT ALGERIA ("WHICH HAS BEEN RADICAL EVER SINCE BOUTEKLIKA PRESIDED OVER UNGA LAST YERA"), AS WELL AS OTHER WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICANS (HE CITED EXAMPLES OF TOGO, CABON AND CAR). HOUPHOUET DOES NOT BELIEVE OAU WILL BE SWUNG AROUND TO SUPPORT MPLA DURING JANUARY MEETINGS, PARTICULARLY AFTER DROPPING UNGA RESOLUTION CONDEMNING SOUTH AFRICAN INTERVENTION. HE PROMISED TO CONTINUE TO WORK AGAINST THIS.

4. HOUPHOUET IS VERY MUCH AFRAID OF SOVIET ROLE IN ANGOLA. HE SAYS THEY MUST BE STOPPED. HE SEES US AS ONLY POWER CAPABLE OF STOPPING THEM SINCE (AN OFT-REPEATED THEME OF HIS) THE WEST IS DIVIDED, FRANCE IS THE ONLY OTHER WESTERN COUNTRY THAT CARES ABOUT AFRICAN, BRITAIN IS UNABLE AND WEST GERMANY IS UNWILLING TO DO ANYTHING. HE BELIEVES US SHOULD NOT ONLY PROVIDE ARMS BUT ALSO TECHNICIANS IN ANGOLA, SINCE FNLA-UNITA UNABLE TO MAN SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS EQUIVALENT TO THOSE BEING PROVIDED TO MPLA BY SOVIETS WITH CUBAN TECHNICIANS.

5. BUT HE FEARS THAT US WILL OFFER TOO LITTLE AND TOO LATE. IT IS NOT JUST ANGOLA. IF ANGOLA FALLS TO THE SOVIETS HOUPHOUET PRIVATELY FEELS THAT MOBUTU CANNOT HOLD OUT, SURROUNDED BY ANGOLA AND CONGO AND SUBJECT TO INFILTRATION AND POSSIBLE OVERTHROW FROM WITHIN HE SAYS ZAMBIA ALSO ISOLATED. IN OTHER WORDS, WITHOUT USING THE TERM, HE DESCRIBED A "DOMINO" THEORY FOR CENTRAL AFRICA.

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6. WHY, I ASKED, HAD NIGERIA RECOGNIZED THE MPLA. SIMPLE, HE SAID, SOVIET UNION HAS CASHED IN ITS CHIPS FOR ITS SUPPORT TO FMG ON BIAFRA. GOWAN, HE SAID, WOULD NOT HAVE DONE THIS, BUT NEW, INEXPERIENCED LEADERS DID.

7. I ASKED HOW OTHER AFRICANS REALLY SAW SOUTH AFRICA'S ROLE IN ANGOLA. HE THOUGHT REALISTS APPRECIATED THAT SOUTH AFRICA WAS PLAYING AN IMPORTANT ANTI-COMMUNIST

ROLE. KAUNDA, MOBUTU AND OTHERS APPRECIATED THIS, HE SAID. IF ANGOLA IS SAVED, HOUPHOUET BELIEVES IT WILL BE KEY TO ACHIEVING DIALOGUE BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND BLACK AFRICA IN CONTEXT OF HAVING HELPED TO STABILIZE SOUTH AFRICA.

8. HOUPHOUET IS DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION OVER ANGOLAN ISSUES. HE RECOGNIZED DIFFICULTY FOR USG WITH NON-ELECTED PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT, ELECTIONEERING BEGINNING FOR NOVEMBER 1976 AND RECENT HISTORY OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. BUT HE SAID AMERICAN'S AFRICAN FRIENDS ARE DISTRESSED THAT US IS NOT TAKING A STRONGER POSITION VERSUS SOVIET INTERVENTION. "FUNDS FROM A SPECIAL DRAWER" ARE HELPFUL, BUT THEY WON'T TURN THE TIDE, PARTICULARLY IF US PUBLIC OPINION IS RETICENT. THE SOVIETS KNOW THIS ALL TOO WELL.

9. HIS FINAL POINT WAS THAT WE SHOULD NOT LET ANGOLA BE ANOTHER SPAIN (1936) OR ASSWAN DAM, OR POST-1954 VIETNAM, WHERE US AND WEST WERE TOO LATE. SOVIETS ARE BANKING ON THAT RATHER THAN ON TYPE OF STAND WE TOOK IN 1962 CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS. HE PLEADED FOR US TO ACT FAST AND FIRMLY. HE DOESN'T WANT TO FIND HIMSELF STANDING ALONE IN THE WORLD WITH TAIWAN AS THE ONLY ANTI-COMMUNIST STATES.

10. I SAID SECRETARY WAS PREPARED TO SEND ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFLE TO SEE HIM (AND I POINTED OUT HOW WELL I KNOW AND RESPECTED OUR NEW ASSISTANT SECRETARY). HE SAID HE WOULD BE GLAD TO SEE SCHAUFLE "THE SOONER THE BETTER". HOUPHOUET WILL BE IN COUNTRY UNTIL JANUARY 7-9. WHEN HE WILL BE IN TOGO HE WILL RECEIVE SCHAUFLE EITHER IN ABIDJAN OR YAMOUSSOUKRO.

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11. AS WE WERE WINDING UP 50-MINUTE DISCUSSION, HE WAS INTERRUPTED BY PHONE CALL BY AMBASSADOR AHOUA IN WASHDC TELLING HIM OF YESTERDAY'S SENATE VOTE (54-20) AGAINST ANY US INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA. HE WAS FURTHER DISTRESSED AND AGAIN URGES US TO ACT SOON AND FIRMLY.

12. COMMENT: THIS WAS HOUPHOUET-BOINGY AT HIS ARTICULATE BEST. HE KNOWS HIS OWN MIND AND EXPRESSED IT FROM HIS HEART AS WELL AND WITH DEEP CONVICTION. I CONSIDER THAT IS OF HIGH IMPORTANCE THAT ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFLE COME HERE SOON TO GIVE HOUPHOUET MORE BACKGROUND ON WHAT US HAS DONE AND HOPES TO DO ABOUT ANGOLA AND TO HEAR HOUPHOUET EXPRESS HIS

VIEWS ON THE ANGOLAN CRISIS AND ITS IMPLICATION
FOR ALL OF AFRICA.
SMITH

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